



**THE INSTITUTION OF ENGINEERS, SRI LANKA**

*NSW Australia Chapter*

P.O. Box 1239, Parramatta NSW 2124, Australia

[chapter\\_secretary@ieslnsw.org](mailto:chapter_secretary@ieslnsw.org)

ABN: 90 045 281 529

## **Annual General Meeting 29-09-2013**

### ***Annual Report***

#### **1. IESL NSW Executive Committee**

IESL NSW Chapter's fourth Executive Committee commenced its term on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2012. Since then committee held eleven committee meetings, numerous working party meetings and Skype meetings and worked on the strong foundation built by the three previous committees. This year's committee included the following:

- Kamal Fernando (Chair)
- Mahinda Karunaratne (Vice Chair)
- Maya Amaraweera (Past Chair)
- Waruna Kaluarachchi (Secretary)
- Priyadarshanie Weeraratne (Treasurer)
- Roy Abeygoonawardana (Editor)
- Dushmantha Thalakituna (Webmaster)
- Udeshini Pathirage
- Maha Mahadeva
- Ananda Herath
- Sunil Wagasooriya

With the help of the members, well wishers and the sponsors, the committee was able to deliver many outcomes as described below.

#### **2. Memberships**

There is no separate membership for the Chapter. All members of the IESL living in NSW and ACT are considered the members of Chapter. Since July this year membership renewals and new memberships are undertaken via online through IESL website. Membership renewal notices are automatically generated and sent to you by IESL.

At the moment there are 81 financial members in the IESL online directly who have been registered as living in NSW and ACT. According to Chapter records there are over 100 members registered in NSW. All members are encouraged to login to IESL website and update your profiles to reflect your current situations.

### **3. Knowledge sharing lectures**

During the year the committee was able to arrange the following three knowledge sharing lectures facilitated by the committee member Ananda Herath. These lectures were held at the Engineers Australia auditorium at Chatswood.

- Indra Jayawardene (NSW Public Works) – Ocean Swimming Pools
- Asanga Wanigatunga (VMware) – Cloud Computing
- Methsiri Aratchige (Origin Energy) – National Electricity Market

In each of these lectures the audience was presented with a range on new ideas to expand their horizon. A summary of these lectures can be found at our website under past events. The members and well wishers are encouraged to continue to attend and share their knowledge.

### **4. IESL NSW Young Engineers day**

This year's Young Engineers Day facilitated by the committee member Udeshini Pathirage was a great success. The following three presenters shared their research findings at the Engineers Australia Auditorium. A summary of these lectures can be found at our website.

- Darshana Perera (PhD candidate, University of Wollongong) - "Soft Soil Improvement using Vacuum Preloading"
- Lashika Medagoda (PhD candidate, University of Sydney) - "Ocean Observation and Navigation"
- Chaminda Konthesingha (Research Associate, University of Newcastle) - "Cyclic In-Plane Shear Behavior of Unreinforced Masonry Wall Panels strengthened with NMS FRP Strip"

### **5. IESL NSW Newsletters**

The Editor Roy Abeygoonawardana with the assistance from Udeshini Pathirage and Nalin Seneviratne were able to issue four newsletters this year. The newsletters carried specialist articles on locomotives (by Udaya Peeligama), St Marys recycled water plant (by Wasantha Wickramanayake), Chair's message and current IESL news etc. Copies of newsletters can be found at our website. The members and well wishers are encouraged to write articles to future newsletters.

## 6. IESL NSW Engineering Excellence Awards

Last year IESL NSW Chapter introduced Engineering Excellence Awards to recognise the commitment of the engineers of Sri Lankan background living in NSW, for the wellbeing of the community and the environment, and the innovative and excellent levels of engineering solutions they deliver.

This year the Chapter extended Engineering Excellence Awards to three categories, namely Best paper published, Best Innovation and Best Infrastructure development project. Thirteen very high quality submissions were received from various fields of expertise. The submissions were assessed by a selection panel based on the following criteria:

- Scope of the nominee's involvement;
- Originality;
- Innovation;
- Value to the community;
- Solutions to an engineering challenge; and,
- Demonstration of excellence

This year's Engineers Excellence Awards were presented at the Gala Dinner. The following winners were selected by a panel comprising of Mahinda Karunaratne, Waruna Kaluarachchi, Maha Mahadeva, Jayantha Katupitiya and Lal Wickramarachchi.

- **Best paper published**  
Winner – Nayoma Tennakoon of University of Wollongong - The Role of Ballast - Fouling Characteristics on the Drainage Capacity of Rail Substructure.
- **Best Innovation**  
Highly Commended - Udaya Peeigama of Sydney Catchment Authority - Warragamba Dam Crest Gate Upgrade.  
Winner – Janaka Weeraratne of State Water Corporation - Fish River Water Supply pipeline replacement project.
- **Best Infrastructure Project**  
Highly Commended - Sanjeevi Sathianandan of RailCorp - Minnamurra railway bridge retransoming.  
Winner – Dilini Kumarasinghe, Rohini Ramachandran, Kandiah Tharumalingam of NSW Public Works – Lithgow Sewerage Augmentation.

## **7. Our Sponsors**

This year the Chapter was able to attract very important sponsors from both private sector and public sector. This is a recognition of IESL members' contribution to NSW. This year's sponsors were:

- Gold Sponsor – NSW Public Works
- Silver Sponsor – Fulton Hogan
- Bronze Sponsors – Sydney Catchment Authority, SMEC, Aquatec-Maxcon, Dulux

## **8. IESL NSW Engineering Conference**

The Engineering Conference 2013 was a great success with large member participation and attracting key public and private sector sponsorships. The Engineering Conference on 31st May at the Engineers Australia Auditorium in Chatswood showcased the professional excellence and contribution to NSW by our members. Five excellent presentations, shortlisted from 13 submissions received for Engineering Awards 2013, made the well-attended Conference an informative and interesting experience.

President of IESL, Eng Tilak De Silva, in his Keynote Speech, provided an insight into the recent developments in IESL.

## **9. IESL NSW Engineers Gala Dinner**

The Engineers Nite Gala Dinner on 1st June at Castle Grand, Castle Hill, attended by 300 guests, was graced by the Sri Lanka Consul General, and the Presidents of IESL and Engineers Australia. The event was filled with highlights from start to end, including the entertainment by 'Drum Beats', presentation of Engineering Awards to five outstanding submissions, music by Fusive, and a sumptuous buffet dinner. The Master of Ceremonies Duke Ramachandran kept the spirit of the Gala Nite right at the top.

IESL President Eng Tilak De Silva talked about the improvements at IESL; membership management, head office building, financial management and web site. Tilak also provided a progress report on the initiatives for a legal framework for setting standards for practicing engineers - currently awaiting Cabinet approval and improving engineering education standards. He also stated that some delegation powers for membership functions will be transferred to Provincial Chapters to reduce travel/ inconvenience for members.

The Keynote speech at the Gala Dinner was delivered by the National President of Engineers Australia Dr Marlene Kanga. Dr Kanga talked about the important role of engineers and engineering in Asian Century. She explained why the engineers with links to Asia especially those who were born there have a major role in developing Australia's strategy for greater engagement with Asia. Dr Kanga also offered Engineers Australia's assistance for Sri Lankan Universities to obtain the full membership of Washington Accord.

## **10. First ever meeting between the Presidents of EA and IESL**

One of the main objectives of the Chapter is to link with Engineers Australia and work towards the mutual acceptance of the engineering degrees and charters between the two countries. This year the Chapter was able to build a strong fruitful link with Engineers Australia.

Following the 2013 IESL NSW Engineering Convention on 31st of May and 1st of June, the National President of Engineers Australia Dr Marlene Kanga arranged an official meeting between the Institution of Engineers Sri Lanka and Engineers Australia.

This is the first ever meeting between two presidents of the institutions and it opened doors for further bilateral discussions in future. The meeting was held on 3rd of June at Engineers Australia, Sydney office in Chatswood and attended by Dr Marlene Kanga, Eng Tilak De Silva, Mr Rupert Grayston (EA Deputy Chief Executive Officer), Prof Robin King (EA Chair of Sydney Accord), Dr David Robinson (EA Director Education and Assessment), Mr Richard Hanna (EA Executive Operations Manager) and Eng Kamal Fernando. It was a very fruitful meeting and the following topics were discussed.

- The process of getting the full accreditation of Washington Accord;
- Accreditation process in Sri Lanka and shortcomings;
- Engineers Australia's E-charter process;
- Mutual promotion of activities and lecturers; and
- In long term mutual acceptance and recognition of degrees and charters.

During the meeting EA expressed the willingness to support the professional development of the IESL members by running professional development workshops for them and to become Chartered in Australia.

## **11. Working towards Washington Accord**

The Washington Accord is an independent agreement for mutual recognition of accredited engineering programs among a group of countries that was formed in 1989. There are two levels of memberships in this group:

1. The Signatories – or full members – that consist of 14 countries including Australia, UK, USA, Canada, and New Zealand.
2. The Provisional Members including Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Germany and Russia.

Professional Engineers within the Signatory countries are mutually recognised as being of equal status. This mutual recognition does not apply for Provisional member countries; however they can work towards obtaining Signatory status.

As a result of facilitation by the Chair, IESL NSW Chapter, the National President of Engineers Australia (EA) Dr Marlene Kanga, agreed to provide mentoring to IESL to work towards Sri Lanka obtaining the Signatory Status. As the first step, EA allowed two IESL Observers to participate in the assessment of several Engineering Programs of the University of Newcastle for accreditation renewal for Washington Accord, held between 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> August 2013. Prof. Niranjani Ratnayake, Vice President IESL, and Eng Roy Abeygoonawardana, Committee Member IESL NSW participated as observers. Following are the progress made as a result of this participation:

1. A report on the lessons learnt from observation of the Accreditation Visit, provided to IESL Chairman, Accreditation Board and President IESL. (August 2013)
2. A review of the IESL Engineering Program Accreditation Manual, and a report on possible improvements. (6<sup>th</sup> September 2013)
3. Participation in a half day Program for IESL Accreditation Panel Members (for an upcoming accreditation of several Engineering Programs in Sri Lanka). Both Niranjani and Roy (from Skype) shared their experiences from the observations of the Accreditation Visit, with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation.

IESL NSW Chapter will continue its drive together with EA and IESL, until achievement of the ultimate objective of Sri Lanka becoming a Signatory to Washington Accord.

## **12. Assistance for newly migrant Engineers**

A key objective of forming the IESLNSW Chapter is to assist recently migrated engineers from Sri Lanka in finding suitable employment in Australia. One of the main problems they face is the lack of knowledge of the Australian job application process.

An action plan has been drawn up by the committee member Sunil Wagasooriya in consultation with the committee to introduce a sustainable mechanism to assist new arrivals in finding jobs and it is being implemented. A section in the Chapter website has been dedicated to providing useful initial information regarding the engineering profession in Australia, government-funded job skill training courses and details of companies providing insurance cover for voluntary employment.

Further, in recognition of the need of proper guidance in managing the individual's job search process, the Chapter has undertaken to build a register of potential mentors among the Sri Lankan engineering community in NSW. When this is in full operation, job seekers will receive individual support of an experienced engineer in NSW. It is expected that the mentor will guide them in analysing job advertisements, preparation of job applications and facing job interviews.

In addition, when there is a sufficient number of job seekers available, the Chapter intends to engage suitable resource personnel to conduct seminars/workshops on the Australian workplace culture and other current topics helpful for job seekers

### **13. Book donation to University of Jaffna Engineering Faculty**

As part of helping engineering education in Sri Lanka, the chapter delivered 26 much needed Civil Engineering text books to the Library of the Faculty of Engineering, University of Jaffna, Kilinochchi. The books were delivered by an IESL delegation comprising of the president, the president-elect, chairman of ICT committee and the president of IESL Northern Province. The VC of the University of Jaffna and staff accepted the books at a small ceremony. The Chapter Chair also attended the ceremony via Skype. The Chapter would like to thank the committee member Maha Mahadeva who made a huge effort to make this book donation a reality.

Discussions are now underway with the Engineering Faculties of Moratuwa and Peradeniya, as to how the Chapter can help those Institutions with the proceeds available from Engineering Conventions.

### **14. Attendance at IESL Council meetings**

During the year IESL president and Council invited Chapter to attend the first part of the Council via video conferencing. The Past Chair Maya Amaraweera attended the first video conferencing with IESL Council and other provinces. This gives an opportunity for Chapter to raise any issues needing attention of the Council.

### **15. Donations to IESL headquarters**

With part of the proceeds from Engineering Convention 2012, the Chapter was able to donate \$5,100 worth of equipment to the headquarters. The equipment which have now been ordered in Sri Lanka include the following:

- iMac for video editing and multimedia activities
- HP LaserJet printer for SLEN and Certificate printing
- Three node NComputing system with screens for the library
- Apple final cut X pro for video editing

### **16. Working with IESL headquarters**

During the year under the guidance of the President Eng Tilak De Silva and the ICT Chairman Eng. Arjuna Manamperi, the IESL undertook a major upgrading of their systems. These uplifts at the headquarters allowed the Chapter to work very closely with them and achieve several milestones.

As a response to a request made by the Chapter, IESL is in the process of streamlining the Charter process. As the first stage of this initiative the candidates can now sit for Paper B in Sydney under the supervision of the IESL NSW.

In addition online membership renewals and new applications are now possible through IESL website <http://www.iesl.lk/>.

## **17. Knowledge sharing through IESL live streaming**

During the year, the Chapter Chair was honoured by the opportunity to deliver the first ever IESL live streaming lecture through Skype to an IESL audience in Colombo and Kandy and several other countries such as Australia, USA and New Zealand. If you would like to share your experience through live streaming from anywhere in Sydney, please write to the Chapter Secretary.

## **18. Improvements to Chapter website**

Building on the upgrading work done by last year's webmaster Pamal Dias, this year's webmaster Dushmantha Thalakatuna further enhanced the features of the Chapter website <http://www.ieslnsw.org>

The website now contains upcoming and past events, IESL NSW newsletters, SLEN, Advice to job seekers, Members' area, Multi media portal, Discussion forums, Recommended readings, useful links etc.

There is now a facebook page and a Twitter account as well making IESL NSW completely present in the cyberspace. Furthermore, you are also invited to submit your project information and photos for sharing the knowledge with the wider engineering community.

## **19. Participation at Techno 2013**

IESL's Techno 2013 is due to be held in Colombo in October. The Chapter has decided to sponsor a small booth highlighting road safety in Sri Lanka. This will include some printed materials and videos borrowed from Transport NSW.

## **20. Financial Report**

A separate audited financial report prepared by the Treasurer Priyadarshanie Weeraratne forms a part of this Annual Report.



## 21. Suggestions for next year

The following is a summary of suggestions for next year. The successful delivery of these outcomes should further improve the membership of IESL in NSW.

- Participate in Techno 2013 in October in Colombo
- Encourage members to use IESL and IESLNSW websites
- Maintain and strengthen the link with Engineers Australia
- Assist IESL to obtain the full membership of Washington Accord
- Actively assist migrant engineers
- Continue to recognise excellence in achievements
- Engage with sponsors and industry partners
- Continue to create opportunities for knowledge sharing
- Continue to work closely with IESL headquarters

The Executive Committee has once again lifted the bar at the Chapter. To be frank I was not surprised by their professionalism but was amazed by their dedication and perfection. They are a great team of engineers full of energy and talents and it was a great pleasure to work with all of them. On behalf of all the members I would like to thank all of them and their families for hard work they put in during the year.

Finally may I remind you that this is your Chapter and its relevancy depends on your participation at all Chapter activities. It is a difficult truth to accept that the engineers are slowly losing our place in the society. It can only be regained by making Engineering Institutions such as EA and IESL more respected bodies. So renew your membership or re-obtain your membership and come along with your colleagues to Chapter activities and be part of it.

I wish you all another great year.



Kamal Fernando FIEAust CPEng MIESL BScEng MEngSC

Chapter Chair, [chair@ieslnsw.org](mailto:chair@ieslnsw.org), 0438 632 716

29/09/2013